

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman

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KOBE HOLDS FIRST ECUMENICAL SERVICES

An important advance in ecumenical relations was made in Kobe, Japan, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18 - 25, 1965. For the first time Christians participated in a series of three ecumenical services held at an Anglican Cathedral, a Roman Catholic Church, and an English-speaking Union Church.

Sponsor of the services was the Kobe Ecumenical Study Group, a fellowship of Protestant and Catholic clergy and lay people.

At the Sunday services, January 24, conducted in English at Kobe Union Church, the Rev. Dr. (Father) Pietro Peretti (S.J.) preached the sermon. This was the first time in the 92-year history of the Church that a Catholic priest had occupied the pulpit. Music was provided by a mixed choir under the direction of Dr. David Larson and Rev. Robert Vliegen. Rev. Arthur Gamblin, who has been active on the planning committee, presided.

Anglican Bishop Hinsuke Yashiro spoke preceding the services at the Anglican Cathedral in Kobe on Thursday, January 21. Bishop Yoshigoro Taguchi, Roman Catholic bishop of Osaka, preached at the service at the Nakayamate Catholic Church on Monday, January 25. Bishop Harold Heininger of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, United States, touring in Japan on an episcopal visit, was also present at the service on Sunday.

An offering of ¥40,000 (\$110) received at the services was to be sent to Izu-Oshima for fire relief, through Japan Church World Service.

In his sermon, Father Peretti said, "We know that there is a new spirit moving the Church in all her dimensions and extensions - the Churches of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church, the Oriental Churches. From top to bottom these are moved to the desire, hope and action for unity." He spoke of the "scandal of our disunity in the missions" as unbearable, and referred to the importation into

Asia and Africa, of the divisions of Christians of the West-- not divisions of the faith or of the Church, "for we proclaim and confess 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church'." Father Peretti stressed "Unity is not uniformity." There is room for hundreds of kinds of liturgies; the rite of the Eucharist is celebrated in the most varied forms, he said.

"The Ecumenical Movement, among both Catholics and Protestants, is not an operation to win converts to one's Church, much less a camouflage tactic for entering the neighbor's church to spread unrest and disorganization among the faithful," he said, "The aim of the Ecumenical Movement is neither 'conversion' nor 'return' but unity, as far as possible and, if possible, perfect unity, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are a perfect unity, and a perfect Church. Let our prayers be for this perfect unity...."

RETIRED MISSIONARY DIES IN JAPAN AT 92

Funeral services for Miss Lillian A. Wells, who died on February 2 at the age of 92, were held at the Tokyo Union Church in Tokyo on February 14. More than 200 friends and acquaintances attended the services.

From Moline, Illinois, Miss Wells came to Japan in 1900 as a young missionary of what is now known as the United Presbyterian Church of the United States.

She taught actively until 9 years ago when her health began to decline. For most of her years in Japan she taught English and shared Christ her Saviour and Lord with all those she met in the various provinces where she worked.

She retired from the mission board under which she served in 1941 at the age of 69, but chose to remain in Japan.

The Asahi Shimbun, one of the largest vernacular daily newspaper in Japan, carried a comparatively long article on Miss Well's life and the funeral service. The article affectionately referred to her as "the grandmother who loved Japan."

According to the article Miss Well's close friend, Miss Nishi (86), was at her bedside when she died.

The article also noted her identification with the Japanese people during their suffering experienced during bombing raids of World War II; her ready willingness to help anyone in trouble; her hesitation to take a regular furlough as she "had no time," making only three visits back to the U.S. during her 65 years in Japan; and her frugal living habits, never having a refrigerator or an electric fan.

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST MEETING

The International Christian Leadership sponsored a breakfast meeting at the Marunouchi Hotel in Tokyo, on February 4.

Attending the event were Japanese Government officials, also among those attending were Dr. Chitose Kishi, chairman of the National Christian Council, and Dr. John C. Gingerich, pastor of Tokyo Union Church and representatives of business and labor groups and their wives.

INDUSTRIAL EVANGELISM

The fact that all denominations are becoming increasingly aware of the urgency of developing a more effective approach to modern society was apparent at the 2nd industrial evangelism conference, held in Himeji, Japan, January 28 - 29, 1965,

under the sponsorship of the National Christian Council.

Forty Japanese pastors and missionaries from many Christian churches and organizations attended the two-day meeting on the theme, "Technological Innovations and Japanese Society," directed by Rev. Masahiro Tomura, secretary of Occupational evangelism committee for The United Church of Christ in Japan.

Among the speakers were Prof. Yoshiro Hoshino, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, on automation and its effects on Japanese society, and Rev. Satoshi Hirata on industrial evangelism in Japan and abroad. In addition to attending the lectures, discussion, and worship services, held at the Church Mission to Truckers on Highway 2 between Kobe and Shimonoseki, the group visited both the highly automated, 11-story, Himeji Plant No. 1 of the Kansai Electric Co., where a crew of 24 men carries on the complete operation, and a middle-sized, match factory employing 300 workers.

Prof. Hoshino credited the adoption of mass production processes with Japan's rapid economic growth in the past ten years. While we can enjoy the affluent society which has resulted, he said, we must recognize that these economic benefits have been gained through sacrifices on the part of the workers.

Work which consists only of repeating a 5-second operation to produce one unit in a mass production system makes no contribution to the personality growth of the worker, he said. The structure of society must be changed so that technical innovations will give more meaning to work.

Reports were made on various denominational and interdenominational industrial evangelism projects, followed by question and answer periods. There was discussion of failures as well as successes. One member of a cooperative ministry, acknowledging the difficulties of this kind of endeavor in Japan, pleaded, "Please try this kind of cooperative group ministry. Only this way can you learn how rewarding an experience it is."

The conference voted to request the National Christian Council to sponsor a similar interdenominational meeting next year, but asked that responsibility for the planning be shared by a local committee of representatives of various denominations. It also asked the National Christian Council to establish a department of industrial evangelism.

ETHICS COURSES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Education Ministry issued instructions on January 31, to prefectural boards of education to use "appropriate" textbooks in ethics classes. Such instruction was the first of its kind issued after the war.

"Appropriate" texts are those which have been checked by the ministry's research council. The council, composed of 11 scholars, set the standards for desirable textbooks after examining six texts for primary schools and 15 texts for junior high schools.

Classes in Ethics were initiated at most primary and junior high schools in 1958 after resistance by the Japan Teachers Union, which insisted that ethics classes were but another attempt for more centralized control as was in force before the war.

Actually only 40 percent of primary schools and 30 percent of junior high schools are using ethics textbooks, the other schools are using the hour-a-week for other purposes than ethics education. The ministry's instruction was an attempt to popularize ethics education.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR JAPANESE-FATHERED WAR CHILDREN

Youths fathered by Japanese in various Southeast Asian countries during World War II may receive scholarships to study in Japan.

Rev. Ryoichi Kato, pastor of the Tokyo Ikebukuro Church, with the aid of others, set up a Southeast Asia Cultural Friendship Society at his church in 1963 to aid Southeast Asian students in Japan and such youths. Kato's interest in the young people stems from his missionary work in Indonesia during the war and visits to Southeast Asian countries after the war. According to Rev. Kato there are about 10,000 such youths fathered by Japanese in Indonesia alone, all of them around 20 years old at present.

A fund-raising campaign to finance the building of a six-story structure on ground adjacent to Kato's church to accommodate 100 such youths and 40 Japanese is now being conducted. One of the leaders in the campaign is Mitsujiro Ishii, a senior member of the Liberal-Democratic Party.

According to the sponsors the undertaking is to "atone for Japan's war responsibility and to promote cultural interflow between Japan and Southeast Asian countries." Those critical of the plan claim its "real aim is to make economic advances," in the concerned countries, and that though it may be "based on good intentions," political and financial circles backing the project intend to utilize the students for economic advances.

Kato hopes to raise about \$550,000 for the building and a scholarship fund. The youths will work part time in Japanese companies and go to school at night.

MARGARET LOBB SPENDING TWO MONTHS IN JAPAN

Miss Margaret Lobb, professor in Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California, is spending two months in Seiwa College for Christian Workers, in Nishinomiya.

Miss Lobb, a specialist in Christian Education, is using her sabbatical year in the interest of Christian Education in Asia, under the sponsorship of the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Association. She will leave Japan on February 23. After visiting in Taiwan and Hong Kong, she will spend several months in the Philippines, Sarawak, and Burma.

Miss Lobb served as one of the leaders in the WCCE Conventions in Toronto in 1950 and in Nishinomiya and Tokyo in 1958. She is well known in the U.S.A. and has been honored for her contribution in the field of Christian Education.